APPENDIX I COMMENT LETTERS RECIEVED

From:

Kramer, David

Sent:

Thursday, April 18, 2002 3:44 PM

To:

Loehr, Jim

Cc:

Huberty, Barbara; Brad C. Wilkening (E-mail)

Subject:

RE: Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project AUAR-16

Jim,

I'm unfamiliar with the specifics in the AUAR. As a partial answer to the questions regarding Valley Side, you can offer the following. David Kramer:

The Valley Side Estates development (referred to as "Valley View" below) includes on-site ponds that are designed to limit the 2-year, 10-year, and 100-year peak stormwater discharges to the same or less than pre-developed conditions, and are designed to meet the water quality requirements in Appendix B paragraph C.2.a. in the MPCA's NPDES permit R110000. Current plans include an additional pond SE of the existing pond.

"Short term 'solutions' such as new developments paying into a fund" is not proposed for stormwater management at Valley Side Estates at this time.

Permit R110000 as discussed above requires the Valley Side Estates owner to remove construction sediment from the pond when sediment reaches 1/2 of the storage volume. If non-compliance is a concern, we would recommend you contact David Morrison with the MPCA at (507) 281-7763.

----Original Message----

From: Brian R Smith [mailto:brsmith@us.ibm.com]

Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2002 2:35 PM

To: Loehr, Jim

Cc: Huberty, Barbara; Kramer, David; konnies@juno.com; Ganske@aol.com

Subject: Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project AUAR-16

Jim (and Barb and David),

We own 72 acres of land that is located at the east end of Eastwood Road, SE. This land has been subdivided into two parcels. One parcel is approximately 8.5 acres that is around our home. The remaining 63.5 acres is a mix of tilled farm land (48 acres) and woods/hills (15 acres). We hope to continue to farm and enjoy this land for the next 10 to 15 years in its current state. After that, truthfully, we then want to develop the land within the R-Sa zoning which we see as permissible within this proposal.

One of our current problems that we have raised with both the County Planning Commission and Rochester City Planning Commission is a water runoff problem with the Valley View development. We have had only one meeting with Dave Bell of Moore Realty and while we have discussed some solutions we have not come to any agreements. We have an immediate need to lessen the impact of not only the current development in this area but future including the approxiamtely 40 acreas to the east of the Valley View development and any and all development on Thein's property which is mostly uphill from ours.

To this end, we would like to work with you, our neighbors, and the developers of surrounding land towards a common goal.

1) Specifically in regards to the water runoff problems with current (and future) developments and our land could you recommend a person that can help us develop a surface water runoff option to lessen the problems?

Currently we have requested of Dave Bell that his business dredge the

current retention pond found on the south side of the Valley View development as this has silted in due to all the new construction in the area. As of today, this has not happened.

In addition we see the need to provide a means to control the excess water run off. It is here we need your help. Short term 'solutions' such as new developments paying into a fund does not help us now. But, bringing long term solutions to the now would be acceptable and we would work with you and developers to this end.

- 2) Can you put us in touch with the developer that is interested in developing Thein's property?
- 3) In regards to Figure 2-5: the proposed stormwater line that runs north-south between our land and Theins runs through an old cow path. This cow path has wooded over over the years. We would like to presearve this strip as a barrior both to new construction on Thein's property and water and wind erosion.

As a proposed solution it would seem better to follow the current drainage ditch that runs between the current water retention pond on the south side of the Valley View development through Thein's property. This parallels Eastwood Road SE and then turns south to parallel the lot line between us and Thein.

- 4) In regards to Figure 2-5: the proposed pond located in the south east corner of the Valley View subdivision seems to be in a different place than it is now. Is the current pond being moved or changed in any way as part of this proposal?
- 5) In a previous proposed GDP for the 40 acres of Thein's property just south of the current Valley View development a larger detention pond was proposed along with a park and the elimination of the eastmost section of Eastwood Road SE. What has happened to this line of thinking. From the proposal seen in Figure 2-5 we see that it has changed, but we want to be sure.
- 6) We would like to discuss with you the placement of the sewer, stormwater, water, ponds and other services and necessary easements across our property. Please give us a call to arrange a meeting.
- 7) In regards to Figure 1-7: Could you give us more information as to the nature of the 'Potential Historical/Architectual Site' that appears on our property? This appears fairly close to the property line between us and Ganske's to our north. This is the first time we have seen this.
- 8) We would like to see some ideas regarding the growth and extension of bike paths in our area. Specifically a goal should be to extend the existing bike paths between us and the intersection of TH 14 and Marion Road.

Regards,

Brian and Konnie Smith 4214 Eastwood Rd, SE Rochester, MN 55904 507-536-7790



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

May 9, 2002

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator Department of Public Works 201 - 4th Street Southeast Rochester, MN 55904

RE: Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer - Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

Dear Ms Huberty,

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer AUAR, in the city of Rochester. This comment letter addresses matters of concern to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) staff reviewing the AUAR and is submitted for consideration by the city of Rochester.

It does not constitute approval by the MPCA of any or all elements of the project for the purpose of pending or future permit action(s) by the MPCA. We have attempted to identify and consult with interested program staff to identify the MPCA permits that may be required. Additional comments or requests for information may be submitted in the future to address specific issues related to the development of such permit(s). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the project proposer to secure any required permits and to comply with any requisite permit conditions.

Based on the information contained in the AUAR, the MPCA staff believes that significant effects related to MPCA issues are not likely to occur as a result of the project. However, please review and consider the following comments:

The AUAR report is a good compilation and analysis of a wide variety of information on the Marion Township review area. The document also provides a sound assessment of the environmental impacts likely to result from the development that sewer extension will allow.

The MPCA, however, does have concerns about the proposed mitigation efforts. In general, the document suggests that existing local programs will provide adequate mitigation. We question whether this is the case. It would be useful if the city of Rochester would describe areas where a higher level of mitigation may be necessary and how such mitigation would occur.

We look forward to receiving the concluding documents. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this review, please contact me at (651) 297-8236.

Sincerely,

Denise Leezer Project Manager

Operations and Environmental Review Section Regional Environmental Management Division

DL:sis

cc:

Joellen Rumley, MPCA, Majors & Remediation Division/MAC
Enrique Gentsch, MPCA, Majors & Remediation Division/MAC
Dave Morrison, MPCA, Regional Environmental Management Division/Rochester Office
Lee Ganske, MPCA, Regional Environmental Management Division/Rochester Office



State of Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Office of Management and Budget Services 500 Lafayette Rd, Box 10 St. Paul, MN 55155

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL COVER SHEET

Number of pages including cover sheet:

DATE: 5/3/02

TO: Banbara Huberty, Public Works

Telephone Number: 507-529-4907

Fax Number: 507-281-62 16

FROM: Bill Johnson, DNR

Telephone Number: 657-296-9229 Fax Number: 651-296-647

COMMENTS:

VAR comments on Marion Rd.

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Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

May 13, 2002

Barbara H. Huberty
Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator
Rochester Public Works Department
201 4th Street SE
Room 108
Rochester, MN 55904

RE: Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project
Draft Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR)

Dear Ms. Huberty:

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has reviewed the Draft AUAR for the Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project Study Area. We offer the following comments for your consideration, which are organized by topics that occur in the document offered for review.

High Value Natural Communities

The Draft AUAR addresses the issue of high value natural communities in several sections of the document, with the context for the issue being provided in the **Background** chapter, Section 4.1-Natural Resources. According to Section 4.1, a natural resources inventory was developed to depict how natural resources could be impacted by future development. This data was incorporated into a Geographic Information System (GIS) so that the features could be easily mapped relative to other types of data examined in the analysis.

In terms of potentially affected natural communities, the analysis relies upon data collected under the Minnesota Biological County Survey (MCBS). Although this is an accepted methodology, its application in this Draft AUAR does have an important limit. Specifically, the MCBS operates at a scale that is insufficient to fully inform future decisions on individual projects as to whether adverse impacts to locally significant, high value natural communities have been prevented. This is because the MCBS was a systematic, but not exhaustive, survey of Olmsted County. Areas less than 40 acres in size were typically not surveyed.

Furthermore, it should be recognized that the MCBS is designed to identify natural communities of statewide significance. It does so by employing high thresholds (e.g., size of occurrence; degree of disturbance; rarity) for a natural feature to meet in order to receive a designation of statewide significance. Given this designation protocol, is incorrect to assume that the absence of a MCBS feature means that an important natural community is not present at a specific site. Essentially, the MCBS design misses "small"

DNR Information: 651-296-6157 • 1-888-646-6367 • TTY: 651-296-5484 • 1-800-657-3929





Fax:6512966047

Barbara J. Huberty Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator May 13, 2002

features that could be locally valuable. This distinction is not academic because locally significant areas may still serve important ecosystem functions as connections between, or buffers around, other natural areas. Land use at the local level should use thresholds of biodiversity tailored for the local scale to determine if sites of oak forest, for example, merit special consideration in planning the development of an area. The recent discovery of valerian, Valeriana edulis, occurring within the Study Area near Rose Harbor Drive is an example of the limit associated with using MCBS mapping to determine whether future development could adversely affect important natural communities.

Comparison of Tables 2-1 and 2-2, Existing (2001) and Hypothetical Development Scenario Land Use and Current Natural Community Land Cover, indicates that a substantial potential is present for preserving and/or restoring high value natural communities in the Study Area even in the fully developed condition. However, this cannot be accomplished without a site-level assessment of whether locally significant natural features are present for individual projects. As the Draft AUAR indicates Part II, Section 6.4, Development Scenario, "[t]he future level of impact cannot be predicted at this time since specific development plans are not in place." Given the lack of site-specific data, the AUAR should recognize that allowing development to proceed without additional field studies in areas known to be potential sites for native prairie or other natural communities fails to capitalize on opportunities that may be present to avoid, minimize, or even enhance these natural features.

The proposed Mitigation Plan provides a partial answer to anticipating and preventing potential development-related impacts to high value natural communities that may be present within the Study Area. Specifically, Draft Mitigation Plan Section 2.2.3, Parkland, states:

"The mitigation plan will include:

Dedicating parkland from each development proposal.

• Considering dedication of natural resource features in lieu of neighborhood parks and recreation fields as a future parkland dedication option."

Given that each project will require parkland dedication that "is evaluated on a plat by plat basis," the Final Mitigation Plan should require a site-specific assessment for potential high value natural communities [as the term is applied in the County Plan], including remnants, for projects to be in compliance with the parkland dedication provision. This assessment need not be overly cumbersome, but should reflect consultation with a professional botanist, arborist, or forester. Because the Mitigation Plan is designed to support future permits and approvals, it is reasonable for the Draft AUAR's Figure 1-4, Natural Resource Inventory, to provide initial guidance on scoping these assessments. However, each site should undergo the survey regardless of what Figure 1-4 depicts.

In considering whether requiring site surveys for high value natural communities should be adopted as mitigation applied to future development, it is valuable to note the role intended for the adopted Mitigation Plan in overseeing projects to come. The Environmental Quality Board (EQB) has offered guidance on how the Mitigation Plan should control the impacts of future development in the Study Area. The EQB publication Guide to the Minnesota Environmental Review Rules (1998) specifically states:

"The mitigation plan is not merely a list of ways to avoid significant environmental effects, rather an action plan on how the effects will be avoided. It is a commitment by the RGU [Responsible

Barbara J. Huberty Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator May 13, 2002

Governmental Unit] and other agencies to take action to prevent impacts that otherwise could occur from project development." (Page 16, original emphasis)

We believe including a site-survey provision for high value natural communities is consistent with the intent of EQB's guidance. Having this information collected and considered during the platting process is necessary for the parkland dedication provision to function properly. This measure could be applied in the Environmental Review Checklist that will be instituted for use by developers as part of the General Development Plan review process.

Parkland

Parkland dedication is an important aspect of the City's plan for future development in the Study Area.

The City of Rochester is to be commended for encouraging the acquisition of land for future park development, including natural resource-based parks. We wish to offer the following points on this topic:

- Joice Park. This park already exists as a protected natural area; it exhibits seeps and springs and should be retained in its current state. Unless the City is planning on expanding this park to the east, which is not indicated in the Draft AUAR, then this park should not be counted toward meeting Parkland Dedication Ordinance requirements.
- Regarding the locations of the two (2) proposed future parks on the extreme western edge of the Study Area, having both facilities located this way does not adequately serve the passive and active recreation needs of the development to come. It also does not capitalize on the ability of the parkland ordinance to be used to protect sensitive resources under the passive recreation ordinance. The Mitigation Plan should include a provision to identify significant sensitive areas that cannot be developed and have those areas designated as passive recreation areas, or simply as natural resource set aside areas.
- Regarding the Parkland Acquisition Plan, we suggest that the timetable for updating be accelerated from the current 5-year timeline. This can be an important tool for protecting natural areas within the project area in a systematic manner rather than relying on such decisions on a project-by-project basis.

Fish, Wildlife, and Ecologically Sensitive Resources

Bear Creek and Badger Run are correctly identified as major environmental corridors within the Study Area. The Final Mitigation Plan in Section 2.3.1 should require that consideration be given to the feasibility of siting sewer lines along the edges of fields and not routed through wooded areas. In addition, the Final Mitigation Plan should indicate that stream crossings be accomplished by directional boring, especially in relatively undisturbed areas.

Regarding Badger Run as characterized in Part II, Section 11.a.1.2.4, an initial stream survey of this waterbody was conducted by DNR in 1995. The stream is not a recreational fishing stream, and has been substantially affected by agricultural land use and urban encroachment.



Barbara J. Huberty
Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator
May 13, 2002

Item 11.a.2.8 should indicate that development in the Study Area will essentially convert the current mix of natural and agricultural (i.e., agriculture) landscapes to a more suburban-type habitat mix. The wildlife present under the future condition will accordingly change to those species more tolerant of human activity and the suburban landscape.

Item 11.b.1 correctly identifies the remnant prairies located in the Rose Harbor Drive area, and across from Eastwood golf course, as being present but does not recognize them as high biodiversity areas. The Rose Harbor area is in fact a nice prairie remnant that exhibits a high diversity of species. Although the two small plots across from the golf course do not include any state-listed species to our knowledge, they merit higher priority because this area is a known stopover location for migrating monarch butterflies. Large numbers of butterflies have been observed in both remnants. Destruction of these remnants would result in the loss of two important migration stopover sites for this butterfly species.

Mitigation Plan

Environmental Review Checklist. The city has identified a number of largely voluntary measures to mitigate the effects of development within the Study Area. An important component of this Mitigation Plan is the Environmental Review Checklist provided to developers. Consistent with Minn. Rules part 4410.3610, subp. 5B, we wish to be notified of the applications for specific projects that come forward in the Study Area. This can be accomplished by providing us with the Environmental Review Checklist submitted for each project. Please direct these notifications to the attention of Don Nelson, Regional Environmental Assessment Ecologist, in DNR's Rochester Office at 2300 Silver Creek Road NE, Rochester MN, 55906. Mr. Nelson can be contacted by phone at (507) 281-7779.

Blanding's Turtle. The Draft AUAR provides a very thorough job of presenting the threatened and endangered species information. The Mitigation Plan discussion of measures available to limit impacts to Blanding's turtle, Emydoidea blandingii, is acceptable but requires clarification. Specifically, the footnote found at the bottom of page 3-24 of the Mitigation Plan is incorrect. A portion of the Study Area (T106N R13W S1/2 Section 4, NE1/4 Section 8, Section 9, E1/2 Section 16, E1/2 Section 21, Section 22, and Section 23) occurs within a potentially important area for Blanding's turtles. There are 14 such areas in the state, which are considered by the DNR to be priority areas for research and management activities, but for which important information on the size and health of the Blanding's turtle populations is lacking. Because of this lack of information, the exact boundaries of the potentially important areas have not yet been determined. However, these areas are becoming increasingly indispensable for maintaining the species' security in the state due to the widespread development occurring statewide on Blanding's turtle habitat. The locations mentioned above are considered to be within an area of statewide importance to Blanding's turtles, thus the Final Mitigation Plan should apply the greater protective measures outlined in Table 3-3 for us in this area.

In addition, a second clarification is needed for the first recommendation listed in Table 3-2 under General Guidelines of page 3-23 of the Mitigation Plan. We recommend that the "Protecting Blanding's Turtle Nests" fact sheet be given to all developers and homeowners in the area, however this is not the flyer that contains an illustration of a Blanding's Turtle. The correct flyer has a "Caution - Blanding's Turtles May Be Encountered In This Area" statement and should be given to all contractors working in the area.

Barbara J. Huberty Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator May 13, 2002

Thank you for the opportunity to review this document and we look forward to receiving the Final AUAR at a later date. DNR supports the use of the AUAR process and we offer our thanks for including our staff in the AUAR scoping process. Please direct any questions that you may have about this letter, to me; I can be reached at (651) 296-9229.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnson, Environmental Planner

Environmental Policy & Review Section

Office of Management & Budget Services

c: Acting Regional Director

Don Nelson, REAE

Russ Schultz

Dan P. Stinnett, USFWS

Jon Larsen, EQB

#20020871-0002 MARIONDAUAR.DOC To: Barb Huberty, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Rochester Public Works Dept 201 4th St SE, Room 108 Rochester, MN 55904

From: Zumbro Land Conservancy board

c/o Mike Schlasner 7 Viking Village Ln NW Rochester, MN 55901

Date: May 13, 2002

Subject: Draft AUAR comments

The Zumbro Land Conservancy (ZLC) board commends the City of Rochester for doing the Alternative Urban Areawide Review (AUAR) for northwest Marion Township. The AUAR is a much better process for environmental review than the previous, piecemeal assessments as it covers a much larger area and provides a more comprehensive and holistic approach to environmental review and mitigation. The AUAR encourages broad citizen participation resulting in a document that reflects the views of many segments of our community. The AUAR also helps developers, allowing them to identify potential environmental concerns prior to purchasing or developing a property. For these and other reasons, we strongly encourage the City to do AUARs for other significant areas of urban growth.

Sincerely,

Zumbro Land Conservancy board

Linda S Lone Michael Schlasner Royanne M Schlesner



Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Comments

Thank you for attending the Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Open House. We appreciate the time you take to be involved in this process and welcome any comments you may have. Copies of the draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan will be available on April 15th at the following locations:

- · Project website: ci.rochester.mn.us/publicworks/auar.htm
- Rochester Public Libraries
- Rochester Public Works Department (see address, bottom of page)
- Local Businesses

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How to Submit Comments:

· Mail to:

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty

Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Rochester Public Works Department 201 Fourth Street Southeast, Room 108

Rochester, Mn 55904-3740

· E-mail:

bhuberty@ci.rochester.mn.us

· Telephone:

507/529-4907

· Fax:

507/281-6216

From:

Kristen, Kristen Walton, Walton [kristen@ptamail.com]

Sent:

Wednesday, May 15, 2002 12:45 AM

To:

Huberty, Barbara

Subject:

Comments on AUAR Project

Name: Kristen Walton-Kimball

Organization Represented: None - I'm a home owner.

Telephone: 507-282-5503 Address: 3557 Elm Ln. S.E. Rochester, MN 55904

e-mail: kristen@ptamail.com

Interest in project: None - other than I do not want water and sewer

service at my residence.

Comments: Ms. Huberty,

I have attended two of the AUAR meetings. I would like to express my concern about the project and let it be known that I do not want city water and sewer at my residence. I cannot afford the expense to hook up to the services (even if incentives are offered). My parents just hooked up to the water and sewer on 25th Ave. in S.E. Rochester and the projected price of \$18,000 was well exceeded. Adding a monthly bill for water and sewer would also add to the hardship. I am also not interested in being incorporated into the city of Rochester. Being incorporated leads to higher taxes, again, something I cannot afford. My well and septic are in fine working order at this time and I feel that repairing or replacing either would be less of a financial burden than hooking up to city water and sewer.

Thank you for your time, Kristen Walton-Kimball

Join the growing network of PTAs! Get your FREE E-mail at http://www.ptamail.com.

From:

tshirt@west.net

Sent:

Tuesday, May 14, 2002 10:42 PM

To: Subject: Huberty, Barbara AUAR - Marion Road

Name : Joel Kimball

Organization Represented: Homeowners

Telephone: 507-282-5503

Address: 3557 Elm Lane S.E.

Marion Township, Mn. 55904

E-mail: tshirt@west.net

Interest in Project: I am interested in stopping this project from going

any further into the Marion

Township.

Comments: I will do whatever it takes to stop this project from encroaching on the Township of

Marion. I will start a petition and if need be a class action lawsuit to stop the City of

Rochester from expanding into this area. There is only one reason The City is interested

in running this sewer project and that is to annex this area. Basically this is nothing but

but a big land grab that smells of GREED. There is no other reason the city

would otherwise be interested in this area except to make

everyone pay for something

they don't want. I like my water ...it tastes and is much cleaner that anything you can

deliver and I don't trust public utilities to keep my

water safe.... especially now with all the

lunatics running around ... how are you going to protect all the water supplies from being

poisoned. I have worked for a water department and I have seen things that made me

sick, from rats to weed killer, contaminating the water and everything was covered up

and the homeowners were never notified.

If this is something that YOU feel strongly about

putting through then you should be

paying us to give up our safe water and septic tanks. This is totally ridiculous to think

that people have \$30,000 to pay to hook up to your system and then have to pay for the

right to drink the water on top of that THAT IS

NUTS..... you want us on your system ...

then you pay us to hook up and don't charge us a dime for the water we will be getting,

otherwise FORGET IT ... turn around and go the other way ... and leave the open land out here alone.

From: Katie Dudley [cnktdudley@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, May 14, 2002 10:41 PM

To: Huberty, Barbara Subject: Marion AUAR

Name: Katie Dudley Organization Represented: Olmsted County Private Citizen

Telephone: 507-367-2744 Address: 925 1st St NW, Oronoco, MN 55960

E-mail: com Interest in Project: Concerned for wildlife habitat and other environmental concerns

Comments: I was at your presentation for the Zumbro Land Conservancy and I agree a person's comment that was made regarding non-native or invasive species. Landscaping around the homes near woodland areas and the seeds being spread with equipment could be a big concern in some areas where there is a vital "natural" plant community. I feel that prime prairie areas and woodlands should be well managed to preserve their purity and habitat qualities.

I really hope the AUAR is utilized by the developers to protect natural communities as much as possible and politicians use it to take a stand on environmental issues with developers. My fear is that there will not be any penalties or desire by developers to cooperate with the AUAR suggestions if they are not made into a law of some kind. Or at least create different zones that are enforced.

Hope this makes sense. You've done a good job on the project - I look forward to seeing the Olmsted County Open Space plan coming out in the future.

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13 May 2002

Ms. Barbara Huberty
Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator
Rochester Public Works Department
201 Fourth St SE, Room 108
Rochester, MN 55904-3740

Dear Ms. Huberty:

We have reviewed the Marion Township AUAR for the Sanitary Sewer Project and have several comments regarding this plan.

- 1. First, an overall comment on the AUAR is that is does little to nothing in actually laying out guidelines on how the City of Rochester plans to address specific impacts to the natural resources of the affected area. The City is aware of the presence of several listed wildlife and plant species as well as a few sensitive areas, yet they have failed to establish specific and adequate measures to ensure the future existence of these elements. The City has identified three levels of restricted areas, yet has failed to establish criteria for restricted development in these areas that actually reflect the importance or degree of development limitations. By this, I mean the City only plans to educate and provide information to landowners and developers. While this approach may be acceptable for low and perhaps medium restricted areas, more direct parameters should be outlined for the areas that have the highest level of development restriction. By merely providing information with no requirements for specific protective measures, we feel the City of Rochester is not fulfilling their responsibility of ensuring the integrity and future existence of special natural resource elements as part of this AUAR. They are simply passing the buck. In situations other than an AUAR, that may be ok to not be specific in what is acceptable in terms of impacts on resources since the DNR would likely have to comment via an EAW. However, since the fact that this is an AUAR, it is our understanding that traditional EAWs for any development proposal within the project area will not have to be completed (provided the development proposal complies with the accepted AUAR - and since this AUAR is very vague, most projects will likely be in compliance). Thus, we feel the Mitigation Plan prepared for the Marion Twp Sewer Expansion has failed, in general, to fulfill the purpose of an AUAR by specifically outlining how development will be approached in regard to the natural resource portion of the plan.
- 2. Our second comment is regarding elements missing from the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) map. The newly located valerian (Valeriana edulis), a state threatened species, from Rose Harbor drive is not identified on the map (and wouldn't have been since it was just recently identified). Also blanding's turtles (Emydoidea blandingii), a state threatened species, along Cty Rd 11 in the Bear Creek watershed is not identified as being in the project area and it should be even though this location is on the border of the project area. The riparian corridor along Bear Creek likely provides the habitat for the turtle, and this habitat occurs on both sides of Cty Rd 11.

It is unclear from the NRI map what areas are considered high biodiversity areas within the AUAR. It doesn't appear that any high importance areas are indicated. It seems the remnant prairies located in the Rose Harbor Drive area and across from Eastwood golf course are identified as prairie, but not high biodiversity areas. The Rose Harbor area is likely too small to offer much protection for wildlife, but it is a nice prairie remnant with a high diversity of species. The two small plots across from the golf course would be, in our minds, higher priority even though they don't include any state-listed species that we are aware of (they do include rare

scaly blazing star), however, this area is a known stopover location for migrating monarchs. Large numbers of butterflies have been observed in both remnants. Destruction of these remnants would result in the loss of two important migration stopover sites for this butterfly species.

In regard to the Natural Heritage Inventory data used as part of this AUAR, the document fails to include, which is required under the NHID agreement, the waiver indicating the data does not represent a complete inventory of listed species and sensitive areas within the project area. The data is being represented as a complete, definitive inventory of the project area in this AUAR and that is directly misleading to anyone reading this document.

3. A major concern we have with this AUAR is placement of the Bear Creek and Badger Run Sub-trunks. Both of these sewer extensions are being placed directly in the floodplain/riparian corridor. These areas are identified as highly restricted areas for development and are also being proposed as environmental and recreation corridors and as fulfilling the parkland dedication ordinance requirements for the City of Rochester. It appears that while the City is trying to dedicate these areas as parkland and environmental corridors, they are not actually protecting the environmental integrity of these corridors by allowing their use for sewer expansion and possible trail expansion. It also appears to violate their own policy of areas designated as highly restricted for development and violates compliance with the Rochester Code of Ordinances that prohibits development in the floodway. Furthermore, no mitigation of damage to these sites has been specifically addressed in the AUAR given they have definite plans to use these riparian areas.

We understand that the Bear Creek sub-trunk is following the stream corridor to capitalize on natural gravity and avoids using a lift station. However, this analysis of the situation is not identified in the AUAR, nor is any information about cost -effectiveness for alternatives given for this known development. If a decision for development has already been proposed with specific details, then specific alternative analyses should be given as well. It seems that providing sewer service to the area above 20th St SE could be adequately addressed by having the sewer service come from above rather than below – this would avoid the need for a lift station and the remaining sewer expansion could proceed along the highway right-of-way like all the other expansion efforts in the area, thus protecting the riparian corridor. It would also seem more logical to place the sewer line in a highly accessible and easily (and already) maintained location such as the road right-of-way. Even if the City determines the cost effectiveness is great by running the Bear Creek sub-trunk along 20th St SE, we feel it is a cost worth taking on as a means to protect the integrity and connectivity of the stream corridor – especially since it may be the only remaining natural connectivity once the entire AUAR project area is developed.

It is our understanding after attending one of the City AUAR meetings, that the cost of installing and maintaining the lift station is the issue driving the Bear Creek sub-trunk location. However, there does not appear to be the same need for the Badger Run sewer line since the area is of the same relative elevation and the line could easily be moved over a small distance to parallel Marion Road and be situated in a right-of-way area that is already maintained for access.

Our concern over this placement is that these corridors are woodland corridors providing habitat connectivity. Installation requires removal of vegetation wide enough to accommodate equipment and materials – along Marion Rd, this was a minimum of 50-60' and more in some locations. The areas are typically not restored to pre-impact conditions or even to native vegetation and likely won't be since the City probably won't want to replant trees over the sewer to prevent root damage and so forth. The area will likely be maintained for access,

meaning spraying and/or mowing, which does not allow for recovery of the area as the City implies and significantly undermines the integrity of the riparian system. If the environmental corridors, as indicated in the AUAR, are only going to be 200' wide where possible, having 60'+ maintained as "groomed or maintained" will further fragment the corridor. Furthermore, there will need to be repeated connections to the main trunk each time there is a hook-up causing repeated and cumulative impacts to the corridor. As a result of these impacts, we do not think it is acceptable for the City of Rochester to, one, be allowed to use these riparian corridors for utility/service development, and two, if they do use them, allow the corridors to serve double duty by meeting the environmental corridor and parkland dedication requirements of developers. And, no mitigation measures have been identified that would offset the impacts to these areas.

These corridors have also been identified as potential trail expansion areas to serve newly developed areas. Again, we don't think these corridors should serve dual purposes by having them meet environmental corridors and then be paved with trails. Trails should be restricted to a specific distance from the ordinary high water mark to prevent future requests to repair or stop eroding banks via the use of riprap. Since the City is proposing to have the environmental corridors be a minimum of 200', perhaps that should be the minimum distance for trail placement from the stream bank.

- 4. In regards to Figure 2-2, the Land Use Plan, which identifies land use designations, there are only two areas identified as future parks. One is Joice Park, which is already in existence as a natural area. This park has seeps and springs and should be retained in its current natural state. Unless the City is planning to expand this park to the east, which is not indicated in the AUAR, then this park should not be allowed to count toward the Parkland Dedication Ordinance requirements. Furthermore, the locations of the two proposed future parks are on the extreme western edge of the AUAR project area. This does not adequately serve the passive and active recreation needs of new development. It also doesn't capitalize on the ability of the parkland ordinance to be used to protect sensitive resource areas under the passive recreation option of the ordinance. The City of Rochester should be required to identify significant sensitive areas that cannot be developed and have those areas designated as passive recreation areas or simply natural resource set aside areas.
- 5. This AUAR does not include any information on how landowners in the project area will be approached and/or compensated for placement of sewer and water towers. We are concerned that condemnation will be used in many cases when alternatives are not adequately sought, particularly in the case of the Bear Creek and Badger Run sub-trunk extensions.
- 6. Throughout the AUAR, the City regularly refers to "acceptable" impacts, yet nowhere in the document does it identify or describe what is considered acceptable. Nor does the document indicate who will determine what is acceptable in terms of natural resource impacts or who will oversee compliance to acceptable impacts. We feel this is a critical issue that needs further explanation because it could have serious implications on the how resources are protected within the AUAR project area. We recommend that the DNR be involved in helping set criteria for identifying "acceptable" impacts to the natural resources.
- 7. Lastly, the City of Rochester is proposing to provide developers with a voluntary environmental review worksheet that would call attention to compliance with the AUAR and mitigation measures. This worksheet should be included in the AUAR for review and should be a requirement of all developers, not a suggestion. Furthermore, since this AUAR fails to specifically address development restrictions, specific mitigation measures and necessary permits for developing highly and moderately restricted areas, we don't think the environmental

worksheet will be of any significance or use to planners and/or developers. We think the DNR should have input on what is to be included in this worksheet since it replaces future EAWs and, again, it should be required of, not optional to, all developers within the project area.

The above outlines the comments and concerns we have regarding this AUAR. Overall, we feel this document does not achieve the goals of an AUAR and contains nothing more than potentially good intentions not backed up with specific plans of action and protection measures. Before this AUAR is accepted by the City Council, we would like to see the above concerns adequately addressed. For your convenience, we have summarized the items we are requesting clarification on in the attachment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our concerns. We look forward to hearing the response to the items we outlined.

Sincerely,

Jame Edwards

BON Nelson Ct SE Rochester MN 55904

Judi Jewes 2310 40 Ace SE Roch. NV 55904

Hand F. Edwards Z Stevens 3003 Nelson CTS & Bochester, MN 55904 Rochester, MN 55904

Summary of Concerns and Requested Action for the Marion Township AUAR

- Provide evidence of cost effective analysis of alternative locations for running the Bear Creek and Badger Run sub-trunks – including addressing why the Bear Creek sub-trunk cannot be serviced from above rather than below.
- Add the missing elements to the NRI map including the state-threatened valerian (Valeriana edulis)
 located in the Rose Harbor area and move the blanding's turtle (Emydoidea blandingii) into the
 AUAR project area located on County Road 11.
- 3. Include in the AUAR wording that recognizes the Natural Heritage Inventory Data obtained from the DNR does not represent an exhaustive survey of the entire AUAR project area. We also request that references to the occurrence of listed and sensitive species and habitats be changed so as not imply that just because none are known to occur in the project area that it means absolutely none occur (again makes reference to misleading the reader that an exhaustive inventory of the project area has been conducted).
- 4. The City needs to identify additional future parks within the AUAR project area. The two identified do not adequately address the needs of the entire project area and its future residents.
- 5. We request that the City accelerate its plan to revise its Parkland Dedication Ordinance to allow for more passive recreation areas or simply natural resource/environmental corridor areas. This includes making passive recreation an equal option to active recreation needs and developing a means to quantify the need for passive recreation since it appears that dedication of these areas is based on such things as enrollment in soccer programs. We suggest two options for quantifying passive recreation needs is to evaluate the membership levels of organizations that cater to such passive activities as bird watching and/or put a question on the November ballot asking the citizens of Rochester if they support dedication of passive recreation areas as equal in need to active recreation areas.
- Identify means of contacting landowners and compensation for use of land affected by sewer expansion and water tower placement.
- 7. Specifically identify what is intended by "acceptable" impacts, and include the DNR in developing criteria for defining and determining "acceptable" impacts. Identify who will be responsible for monitoring compliance with acceptable impacts and ensure adequate mitigation measures are taken.
- 8. Be more specific with mitigation measures for impacts to natural resources. Educating developers is simply not acceptable as the only mitigation means in areas with high development restriction or areas that harbor listed and/or sensitive species and habitats.
- 9. Identify some of the highest biodiversity areas within the AUAR project area as simply off limits to development. The City has the authority and obligation, not to mention a great opportunity through this AUAR, to protect the integrity of some of these areas for current and future citizens and for the intrinsic value of the resource.
- Make the environmental review sheet a mandatory requirement for all developers within the AUAR project area and allow the DNR to assist with development of this worksheet.

From: Sent: O. William Bruins [wbruins@earthlink.net] Wednesday, May 15, 2002 1:51 PM

To:

Huberty, Barbara

Subject:

Marion Road Trunk Sewer Project AUAR

Interest: The preservation of natural areas.
Organization: Zumbro Valley Audubon Society
Comment: Require contractors hired to do work, such as laying sewer or water lines that pass through natural areas to thoroughly clean all equipment, mechanical or otherwise, to reduce the chance of introducing alien species into the natural area.

O. William Bruins 1538 11th Avenue NE Rochester, MN 55906-4213 507-281-1607 wbruins@earthlink.net

Jim Baier

2620 Brookwood Ct. SE Eyota, MN, 55934

May 15, 2002

Barbara J. Huberty 201 4TH Street SE Room 108 Rochester, MN, 55904

Ms. Huberty,

First of all I want to let you know how much of an eye opener this process has been for me. Perhaps never before has there been such a level of open information available between governmental bodies.

I have looked over the document and will comment by appendix.

Appendix B:

The traffic count was done in July 2001, at that time of the year it would not have shown the additional traffic associated with the schools in and near the study area. Some of those schools are Mayo High School, Willow Creek Middle School, Pinewood Elementary, Longfellow, Faith Christian, Victory Christian, RCTC, and UCR. The added traffic of students, staff and support would certainly be a factor in any concise traffic study. Additionally the traffic count at the 20th Street and Marion Rd. Intersection was flawed because at that time last year the road was barricaded as the sewer project was taking place. The 1998 traffic count was before the upgrade of Marion RD. Much of the traffic generated near 50th Ave. that would have used 20th Street was probably using 50th to Hwy 14. That intersection was not counted.

Problems at 40th and 14 will intensify as current devolpment builds in, MNDOT has stated that if traffic reaches an unacceptable level they will close the median until such time as 14 upgrades to 4 lane to the east. That would make the 40th south to 20th absolutely necessary. Eastwood road is already a concern and should not have any additional traffic dumped on it. The worst intersections are the 40th/Hwy 14, Eastwood Rd/Marion Rd and are also the most difficult to resolve.

Under 4.3, Those roads label as partial responsibilities are in the OAA boundaries and I believe tha Marion Township should have no additional responsibility for acquiring any additional ROW, etc.

Appendix E:

I was quite surprised to see my father's name on the well inventory list. My folks died in 1974, we sold there place in 1975 to Earl Thomann. In 1976 Mr Thomann drilled a new well as did his neighbor Evelyn Grant. Many of these old sandpoint wells are not and have not been in use for perhaps decades. The information is flawed and would certainly bear further investigation. The inclusion of this inaccurate information could certainly predjudice the need for extension of city water and sewer service.

Appendix F:

I have strong reservations against allowing the city to determine the final boundary. The project study area is an estimated 4315 acres, however during the preliminary draft AUAR process the city had identified a sewer extension outside the study area. This was called the Bear Creek/50th ave. subtrunkline and extended nearly ½ mile north of the project area and had a planned build date of 2002/3. Recently the city has agreed to remove an additional 200-300 acres if the township would look at allowing the replacement of that block of land again changing the boundaries. If this project is to be built it should be progressive and serve those that it was intended for not to just add new land to the city.

In conclusion I would like to thank you for allowing my comments

Sincerely

Jim Baier Marion Township Supervisor

Micewel 10:15 am 5/14/00



Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Comments

Thank you for attending the Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Open House. We appreciate the time you take to be involved in this process and welcome any comments you may have. Copies of the draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan will be available on April 15th at the following locations:

- · Project website: ci.rochester.mn.us/publicworks/auar.htm
- Rochester Public Libraries
- · Rochester Public Works Department (see address, bottom of page)
- Local Businesses

| Name: | DEAN WALDOF |
|------------------------------|---|
| Organization Represented: | |
| Telephone: | Hm: 285-5659, Wk: 535-2302 |
| Address: | 4215 20th Street SE Rochester, MN 55904 |
| E-mail | dwaldof a Celestica.com |
| Interest in Project: | Land Owner (with Bear Creek running through our property) |
| Comments: | see attached letter |
| | Please use back of page if necessary |

How to Submit Comments:

· Mail to:

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty

Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Rochester Public Works Department 201 Fourth Street Southeast, Room 108

Rochester, Mn 55904-3740

· E-mail:

bhuberty@ci.rochester.mn.us

· Telephone:

507/529-4907

· Fax:

507/281-6216

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty

Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator Rochester Public Works Department 201 Fourth Street SE, Room 108 Rochester, MN 55904-3740

Subject: Comments on Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project

My wife and I own eighty acres that will directly be impacted by this project. Bear Creek winds through our property from the northeast corner to the southwest corner. Our property was the former Boy Scout Camp in Rochester for nearly seventy years. This piece of land has a long history and strong emotional ties to the people in southeastern Minnesota. It was front page news in the Rochester Post Bulletin when my wife and I "saved" this property when we purchased it in 1997. The article also talked about the petition signed by hundreds of residents requesting that this native Minnesota forest and prairie land be preserved. Our intent is just that. We currently live in the relatively small ranger house on the property and we intend to build a home deep in the woods and live out our lives there. We do not want to develop this property.

It would take decades for this native forest to recover from a sewer trunk line excavation. It would destroy the character of this land which would not recover in our lifetime. We bought this property to enjoy and preserve it. It would be a crime to see it destroyed by a Public Works project.... especially when there are alternatives.

There are already utility easements along 20th Street and 42nd Avenue. If the sewer followed the road it would minimize the destruction of our and our neighbors' properties. I have been told that the sewer line would need to be buried over sixty feet deep if it followed the road. This excuse does not seem to be fact based. Contour maps indicate that it is possible without that degree of excavation. The very highest point in the road (which is only for a couple of hundred feet) is at an elevation of 1080 feet while the creek at that point is at 1040 feet. I doubt that the sewer would be buried twenty feet below the creek bed level. The sewer line only has to be lower than the lowest house to be serviced. Since homes cannot be built in the flood plain the sewer doesn't have to be even as low as the creek level as it runs past our property. We believe we are entitled to see a proposal showing what it would actually take to run the sewer along 20th Street and 42nd Avenue.

If the sewer trunk cannot run along 20th Street than it would be preferable that it ran north of our property. There is a natural elevation drop along our north boundary and there is no land outside the flood plain that would be lower than the sewer trunk line.

For the cost of a few extra feet of sewer line either one of these alternatives would save a rare section of native southeastern Minnesota forest and prairie land. Since we do not plan on developing this property it would also preserve the character and our intended use for this land.

I am also concerned that proper care and property protection is taken during and after construction. The soil here is sandy and subject to erosion. There are also may sensitive birds and animals that consider our land a sanctuary. Trespassers on dirt bikes and ATV's have cut fences and run over and killed young trees (many of which I had hand planted). They have also increased erosion by cutting into hillsides and creek banks. Before I was able to mend the fence on our southwest corner this spring we had dirt bikers tearing up our property. I hope that they didn't disturb too many sensitive species. We had a nesting pair of Blue Heron in our section of the creek which I haven't seen now for a few weeks. I mention this because it is critical that appropriate measures be taken during and after construction to protect our property. We currently have fencing and and/or natural barriers on all side of our property. If construction removes these barriers... we WILL have motorized trespassers destroying our property. Temporary fencing during construction and permanent fencing afterwards are a must.

Our property needs to be protected not only from trespassers but also from people working on the project themselves. Trees can be destroyed simply by driving over their roots and compacting the soil. The soil here has never been disturbed and is easily compacted. Equipment needs to be kept only on the sewer trunk line path itself. No equipment should be driven into the woods or onto the native prairie... even just to turn around.

Oak trees require special protection. There is currently a battle going on in southeastern Minnesota to save oak trees from a disease called oak wilt. This fungus is transmitted between oak trees either through the root system or by the fungus attaching itself to a wound on the tree. The airborne fungus comes from oaks trees that died from oak will the previous year. The dead tree will sporulate usually in the spring, but airborne oak wilt spores have been detected as late as August. Spores can attach themselves to an open wound within minutes. Any trimming or cutting of oaks need to be protected immediately with a pruning tar. This includes tree stumps since oak roots grow together into one large living organism. I have been working with the DNR and have spent hundreds of dollars and countless hours isolating healthy oak groves from oak wilt hot spots. Ed Hayes from the DNR is actually using our property as a showcase of what can be done to protect oak savannas from this disease. It would be preferable that horizontal boring equipment be used to install the sewer line near any major oak stands. It is also imperative that everyone working on the project is educated and sensitive to these (and other) environmental issues. This has already been a problem on THIS project. Yesterday (5/14/2002) Yaggy Colby workers were on our property marking our north property line with lath. In the process they removed some small oak trees (up to twenty feet tall) and cut some oak branches on larger trees. This MAY have been unavoidable in order to mark the property line but NOTHING was done to protect the wounds. It breaks my heart that after all my efforts and expense to protect this oak grove that these trees my already be infected by careless workers.... even before the project officially begins. If workers on this project are so poorly educated or have such a flippant disregard for environmental issues... what other irreversible damage is going to be done before this project is over?

Dean Waldof

4215 20th Street SE Rochester, MN 55904

hm: 507-285-5659 wk: 507-535-2302

email: dwaldof@celestica.com



Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Comments

Thank you for attending the Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Open House. We appreciate the time you take to be involved in this process and welcome any comments you may have. Copies of the draft AUAR and Mitigation Plan will be available on April 15th at the following locations:

- · Project website: ci.rochester.mn.us/publicworks/auar.htm
- · Rochester Public Libraries
- · Rochester Public Works Department (see address, bottom of page)
- Local Businesses

| Name: | Alen Metchell |
|------------------------------|---|
| Organization Represented: | |
| Telephone: | · · |
| Address: | 2345 Maur Rd |
| E-mail | |
| Interest in Project: | |
| Comments: | Please send her a copy of the Justle + section of AUAK on Blanders Justle + Blue Racer for Extersion meeting thoules. |
| | Please use back of page if necessary |

How to Submit Comments:

· Mail to:

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty

Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Rochester Public Works Department 201 Fourth Street Southeast, Room 108

Rochester, Mn 55904-3740

• E-mail:

bhuberty@ci.rochester.mn.us

· Telephone:

507/529-4907

· Fax:

507/281-6216



Marion Road Trunk Sanitary Sewer Project Alternative Urban Areawide Review Public Comments

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- Rochester Public Libraries
- · Rochester Public Works Department (see address, bottom of page)
- Local Businesses

| Name: | Donald : Virginia Van Keulen |
|------------------------------|---|
| Organization Represented: | Property Owner |
| Telephone: | (507) 282-2144 |
| Address: | 3005 15th St. SE Rochester MN 55904 |
| E-mail | donvk9 Djuno. com or vanku Omayo. edu |
| Interest in Project: | Catch Basin/retention pond BC-p2.1.16a |
| Comments: | According to the current plans this catch basin is located in our front yard on our property. We do not want it on our property. A new location needs to be found. Please use back of page if necessary. |

How to Submit Comments:

Mail to:

Ms. Barbara J. Huberty

Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator

Rochester Public Works Department 201 Fourth Street Southeast, Room 108

Rochester, Mn 55904-3740

· E-mail:

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